



WINTER 2013



Scenes from a Mall

Unexpected Twist Sabotages Officer's Family Outing

James Zeban was expecting to spend a fall Saturday afternoon with wife Beatriz and their 5-year-old daughter Gia at the Woodbridge Mall.

So much for expectations.

Before Zeban, a senior correction officer at New Jersey State Prison, ever set foot in the mall, he helped to stop an assault, chased and eventually apprehended the perpetrator and spent much of an afternoon that had been set aside for a family outing at the police station.

"It was supposed to be a relaxing day," he said, forcing a weak smile as he recalled the September 22 ordeal.

The episode unfolded shortly after Zeban, 36, parked his car and began making his way to the mall entrance along with his wife and child.

"On the way in, I started thinking I'd forgotten to lock my car, so I went back to check," he related. "I told my family to go into the mall and that I'd be with them shortly. As I headed back toward the mall, I heard somebody



James Zeban's day at the mall turned into a day at the police station after he helped to stop an assault and apprehend the perpetrator.

Photo by Scott Franks

screaming for help. In front of the entrance, I saw an individual on top of another person, repeatedly punching him with a closed fist."

Zeban ran toward the melee, which was taking place in full view of shoppers. He identified himself as a law enforcement officer and yelled for the perpetrator to stop the assault. At the same time, a Woodbridge police officer was driving by, so Zeban immediately made him aware of the assault.

The suspect apparently robbed the victim before finally stopping his assault and running toward the parking lot. The Woodbridge officer gave chase in the police car, while Zeban pursued on foot.

"The suspect was zig-zagging between cars," Zeban said. "Then, as I ran down an aisle, he took a wrong turn and ran right at me. I took out my badge and again identified myself as a law enforcement officer. At that point, he stopped and put his hands up in the air."

Within moments, the police officer, the victim and another person who claimed to have witnessed the incident all arrived.

"The attacker started to say there's been a misunderstanding, that he was actually the victim and that he was being robbed," Zeban remembered. "I looked at the other guy, whose face was swollen and bloodied. I then told the suspect to place his hands on the vehicle in front of him and not to move."

The police officer was similarly unimpressed with the attacker's version of what had transpired. He placed the perpetrator in handcuffs and deposited him in the back seat of his squad car.

Oddly, in the midst of his arrest, the suspect began yelling for someone to telephone his mother.

"The guy who claimed to have witnessed everything suddenly spoke up," Zeban reported. "He said, 'How can I call your mother when you have my cell phone?' At that point, the police officer kind of put two and two together, and he realized that this so-called witness was involved as well."

The primary suspect, a hulking 6-foot-3, 240-pound 18-year-old with a prior criminal record, was found to have a knife in his possession. He was taken to the police station and charged with robbery and aggravated assault.

Both the victim and Zeban, whose wife and daughter had no idea of what had occurred until after the fact, went to the police station to provide statements on the incident. While at the police station, Zeban was thanked by the arresting officer as well as the victim, who repeatedly expressed his gratitude.

"I basically did what they teach in the [Correctional Staff] Training Academy," said Zeban, a New Jersey Department of Corrections employee since 2004. "If you see somebody who needs help, you help. To be honest, I didn't think twice; I just reacted. After the knife was found, I realized he could have pulled it on me, but luckily, that didn't happen.

"When I spoke to the victim," he continued, "I told him that if the roles were reversed, hopefully he'd do the same for me."





WINTER 2013



On the Move

Hurricane Sandy-Related Evacuation of Southern State Carried Out Flawlessly

During a Thursday, October 25, meeting of the New Jersey Department of Corrections' Executive Staff, the topic that dominated the discussion was the impending arrival of Hurricane Sandy. Those seated around the table were especially concerned about the possibility that the so-called "super storm" was on a collision course with Southern State Correctional Facility.

Everyone at the meeting was well aware that Southern State's modular trailer units, which house more than 2,200 inmates, would be no match for the ferocity of the hurricane, whose wind speeds were expected to approach 100 miles per hour. A determination was made to relocate a significant number of the inmates to other facilities across the state.

"The trailers at Southern State can withstand wind gusts up to 60 miles per hour," reported Major Matthew Kyle, who heads the department's Special Operations Group (SOG). "Since winds gusts for this particular storm exceeded that, it was decided that an evacuation was necessary."



Among the key players in the evacuation of Southern State Correctional Facility were (from left) C. Ray Hughes, Southern State administrator; Major Joe Polyi, who oversees the Central Medical/Transportation Unit; and Bettie Norris, director of Operations.



Members of the Special Operations Group, including Lt. Clay McClain (left) and Major Matthew Kyle, played a critical role in the evacuation.

Photos by Scott Franks

With the hurricane fast approaching, preparations for the evacuation – in tandem with a plethora of other emergency actions throughout New Jersey and beyond – began immediately, as the Division of Operations determined which NJDOC facilities had vacancies.

“Housing units that had been closed for renovations, or perhaps due to not having enough inmates to fill the beds, were utilized,” Kyle said.

In the early-evening hours of October 26, the Central Transportation Unit provided more than 50 officers and 13 busses to transport a total of 535 inmates from Southern State to five prisons in various parts of the state, as follows – Adult Diagnostic and Treatment Center (59 inmates), Albert C. Wagner Youth Correctional Facility (269), Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (96), Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility (79) and New Jersey State Prison (32). The next day, 518 Southern State inmates were transported across New Jersey to Northern State Prison, while 44 inmates were moved to New Jersey State Prison. A day later – on Sunday, October 28 – the evacuation operation was completed, as 675 inmates were relocated to South Woods State Prison.

In less than 48 hours, a total of 1,772 inmates were moved from Southern State to NJDOC facilities all over the Garden State.

“Transporting large numbers of inmates is what our officers do every day,” said Sergeant James Mitchell, who has been part of the Central Transportation Unit for 18 years, the last four as a supervisor.

“Nobody was hurt, there were no accidents, and there were no incidents with the inmates,” he continued. “Any bumps in the road were handled instantaneously. It was such a well-coordinated effort. SOG provided security, following our busses and providing personnel on the ground to make sure there were no disturbances. The staff at Southern State did a great job. Directors from [the Division of] Operations were on the scene, making sure everything functioned smoothly. And I can’t say enough about the staff in this unit. They take a lot of pride in their jobs, and it showed.

“When you have a situation like this, the people involved in carrying out the evacuation are in a tough position. The storm hit on Monday, so most people had Friday, Saturday and Sunday to prepare their homes. Our staff didn’t. From Friday on, everyone was working.”

A year earlier, Southern State inmates had been evacuated due to the potential threat posed by Hurricane Irene. The lessons learned during that operation were applied during both the planning and execution of the Hurricane Sandy evacuation.

"We made sure everyone involved had input, that everything was well thought out and that if any issues did come up, they were addressed as quickly as possible," said Bettie Norris, one of three Division of Operations directors involved in the evacuation. "We knew it was essential for the lines of communication to remain open throughout the operation."

Southern State Administrator C. Ray Hughes noted that a seemingly minor rule adjustment made during the most recent evacuation proved to have a significant impact on the overall process.

"This time, inmates were permitted to carry overnight bags containing certain approved items," he related. "As a result, the inmates remained relatively calm, considering the circumstances."

In order to avoid confusion, the inmates were moved with more than just an overnight bag. Traveling along with each offender was a face sheet, a medical folder and, if necessary, prescribed medications.

"Our primary objective, obviously, is to make sure no inmates escape," said Lt. Clay McClain of SOG. "That's why we worked along with the facilities to make certain we had face sheets for every inmate. That way, as the inmates were moved off their housing units [at Southern State], they were kept together in busses. Then, once they were transported and were moved from bus to gate, we were able to make sure the count matched the count that was originally put on the bus."

"Face it, this could have become a volatile situation for any number of reasons. All it takes is for one thing to go wrong, and we're in a bad position. Fortunately, the proper security measures were in place, and it turned out to be a textbook operation. It was just a matter of executing the plan."

Following the storm, that plan essentially was executed in reverse, as the displaced inmates were returned to their units at Southern State. It turned out that the region in which the prison is situated wasn't impacted by the hurricane nearly as severely as many others areas of the state.

Now, with the benefit of perspective, Kyle – like Central Transportation’s Mitchell and a host of others involved in relocating the Southern State inmates – is convinced that the operation couldn’t have succeeded without the dedication of the staff.

“We have people whose families were evacuated, whose houses sustained significant damage, yet they were here every day,” Kyle said. “They were willing to place their jobs above everything else, because that’s what we’ve taken an oath to do. That kind of personal sacrifice speaks to the caliber of this department’s employees.”





WINTER 2013



An Unexpected Turn of Events

Southern State Correctional Facility Officer Responds to Shooter

What was supposed to be a relaxing night out for Senior Correction Officer Joseph Lopes and his wife turned into an unforgettable experience reminiscent of something out of a movie.

The scene unfolded outside of a Philadelphia establishment managed by a friend of the Lopes'. Hours earlier, the couple had stopped at the tavern for a few moments. Their brief visit lasted longer than they had initially anticipated, and they ended up hanging out for the night.



With New Jersey Department of Corrections Commissioner Gary Lanigan by his side, Senior Correction Officer Joseph Lopes displays the Medal of Valor he received during the department's 2012 Service Awards ceremony.

"The place was quiet," recalled Lopes, a Southern State Correctional Facility officer and New Jersey Department of Corrections veteran of almost 11 years. "We also knew the deejay, so we decided to stay."

It was the early hours of the morning, after an uneventful night, when the atmosphere shifted. Two female customers, who had been at the tavern with a male friend, became irate over no longer being served alcohol and began to cause a commotion.

Photo by Allen Trach

Stated Lopes, "It was ugly. When the security guards grabbed them to escort them out, they were fighting and kicking. Finally, security got them out."

With the removal of the disgruntled patrons, what had quickly escalated inside the tavern, appeared to calm down in an instant.

However, little did Lopes know, a chaotic scene was erupting outside, and the women who had just been put out were at the center of the drama.

Lopes was also unaware that his friend "Karen," the manager, was outside trying to break things up and send people on their way.

"When I went to lock the side door," Lopes related, "Karen's brother came to me and said, 'You can't leave my sister out there.'"

"He looked at me to do something," he continued. "My wife didn't want me to go outside, but I told her that I would get Karen and come back inside. As soon as I touched the door and started to exit the side of the bar, I heard 'boom, boom, boom' that sounded like it was coming from across the street. Multiple rounds of gunfire were going off."

"Once I got outside, I could see Karen in front of me trying to hide behind a utility pole. I didn't realize that the guy that was doing the shooting happened to be around the corner. When I got close to Karen and was about to grab her to take her back inside, I looked to my left and I saw a guy with a black gun in his hand pointed in my direction."

Lopes credited his training and his experience as an NJDOC adjunct range instructor kicking in at that critical moment.

"I pulled out my weapon, pivoted in his direction, and I said, 'Police. Drop the gun. Police. Drop the gun,'" he recalled. "At that time, he fired two rounds at me, missing me."

When Lopes fired back, the shooter disappeared into the dark of night, but the ordeal was far from over.

Almost immediately, the gunman resurfaced and began firing once again.

After a brief exchange of rounds between the two, the gunfire came to an abrupt end when the assailant was hit by one of the rounds fired by Lopes.

It turns out that the shooter was the male friend of the unruly female patrons who had been at the tavern that night.

Witnesses reported the shooting spree was precipitated by a physical altercation that occurred between the man and another patron after the women were thrown out of the tavern.

"He went up the street, got his gun from his car, and he was firing in the direction of the tavern as he was walking," Lopes said. "Unfortunately, a fight turned into something bigger."

In addition to his range training, Lopes also believes the fact he had not been drinking on that fateful night was key to his response to such a dangerous situation.

"If you're going to drink, don't carry a weapon," he advised.

Fast forward months later, and it is not difficult to understand why SCO Lopes would be awarded an NJDOC Medal of Valor. His actions that night likely saved countless lives – not only his friend's and his own, but the lives of all those who witnessed the ordeal unfold and were in the line of gunfire.





WINTER 2013



A Learning Experience

Tuition Aid Program Can Help Defray Higher Education Costs

Should you decide to further your education at a regionally accredited educational institution of higher learning, the New Jersey Department of Corrections is willing to provide financial assistance to support that decision.

Through the Tuition Aid Program, you can receive reimbursement up to half of the mitigated cost of your tuition, based on the grade you earn, up to a maximum of 12 credits in a fiscal year.

The Tuition Aid Program was first established back in 1998 and temporarily discontinued before its reinstatement by Commissioner Gary Lanigan in time for the Spring 2012 semester. Since then, more than 100 employees, both custody and civilian, have taken advantage of the program.

"The program is designed to support the ongoing learning and professional growth of departmental employees, who in turn will continue to develop productive and desirable skills," said John Elfo, Human Resources manager.

"We also believe this program will enhance our efforts to retain qualified staff, since courses must be related to a staff member's current job assignment or career aspirations within the department."

"The program is designed to support the ongoing learning and professional growth of departmental employees."

Elfo added that courses must be taken at a regionally accredited institution of higher learning. He cautioned that with the explosion in the availability of on-line courses, it is essential to make certain that the educational provider has the necessary accreditation.

According to Veronica Tingle, a technical assistant in the Office of Human Resources, the Tuition Aid Program is open to full-time employees with at least one year of continuous service. She also noted that the cost per credit is calculated based on the rates of state colleges and universities such as Rutgers.

A unique aspect of the program stipulates that tuition reimbursement is directly based on the grade achieved a given course. In order to obtain a reimbursement rate of 50 percent, a grade of A or B must be achieved in an undergraduate course, or an A grade should be attained in a graduate course. In order to obtain a 33 percent reimbursement rate, undergraduates must receive a grade of C, while graduate students require a B grade. Grades below those standards will not be eligible for tuition reimbursement.

"The idea," Elfo said, "is to promote the learning process by encouraging employees to pursue the highest possible grade."

For more information about the program, contact the Office of Human Resources.





WINTER 2013



Dogged Determination

Puppies Behind Bars Program Receives Prestigious Department of Defense Award

By Donna Clementoni

One of former Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women Administrator William Hauck's last orders of business before his retirement from the New Jersey Department of Corrections was accepting the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Seven Seals Award for overseeing the facility's Puppies Behind Bars program.

The facility and the Puppies Behind Bars program were lauded by the ESGR during a January 23 ceremony for "extreme patriotism and/or exemplary efforts toward supporting our nation's military members and the mission of the National Guard and Reserve."



The Puppies Behind Bars program received the Seven Seals Award from Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Photo by Allan Trach

ESGR is a Department of Defense organization, comprised primarily of volunteers, that seeks to create a culture in which all American employers value the military service and support of their employees.

Hauck was instrumental in solidifying the program at Edna Mahan which has, during a 12-year span, had 122 dogs go through obedience training with 89

participating inmates. Most importantly, 79 of the canine graduates are currently utilized by the police or the military as explosive detection dogs.

After the inmates teach the dogs the basics, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Central Intelligence Agency and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives provide advanced training.

The canines play an important role in national defense. These loyal fur-covered soldiers have been described as "worth about 10 soldiers -- not in their capabilities, but in their senses," by Air Force Staff Sergeant Zeb Miller.

America's defense hasn't been the only beneficiary of Puppies Behind Bars. "The program," said instructor Jan Brady, "gives the ladies [who are incarcerated at Edna Mahan] more to work with on the 'outside'" upon completion of their sentences.



These two puppies were among the guests of honor during the January 23 ceremony at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women.

Photo by Allan Trach

During his remarks at the January 23 ceremony, NJDOC Commissioner Gary M. Lanigan added, "I can't think of a better way of giving back to the community than by protecting our soldiers overseas."

I wholeheartedly agree. In fact, on the day of the ceremony, I had an opportunity to visit the prison's classroom with correctional officers, including two who are citizen soldiers with the

National Guard, and other prison officials to acknowledge the important mission of Puppies Behind Bars. I pointed out to the inmates that I know military members and their comrades whose lives were saved by the instincts of a well-trained military working dog and that this program's contributions are invaluable.

In addition to recognizing the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women for its Puppies Behind Bars program, ESGR also recognized the prison for being "employer patriots."

Currently, more than 48 percent of the nation's defense comes from the National Guard and Reserve. Described by leaders as "humble at home" and "men of deeds, not words" it is often volunteer organizations such as ESGR that advocate for the men and women who serve not only their civilian employers but who also, when summoned, defend America's freedom and assist in national emergencies.

ESGR applauds and recognizes employers who practice personnel policies that support employee participation in the National Guard and Reserve.

Perhaps Colonel Alan Smith, who retired from the United States Marine Corps and serves as ESGR state chairman, said it best. "As an inmate, a volunteer, a soldier, an employer or a puppy," he related, "we all serve."

Donna Clementoni, an Egg Harbor Township resident, is director of Employer Outreach for ESGR.





WINTER 2013



Explosive Situation

Department of Corrections Employees Respond Heroically to Motor Vehicle Accident.

Tuesday, October 16, 2012, was a sunny, exceptionally warm autumn day, and by 4 p.m., Route 195, which runs from the Jersey shore to Trenton, was flooded with traffic, as tens of thousands of commuters headed home.

On this particular day, however, mile marker 3 in Hamilton Township, Mercer County, would be the scene of an accident that would cause a chain reaction that nearly cost a New Jersey state trooper his life. And indeed, Major Wayne Manstream and Senior Correction Officer Marlena Banko, both employees of New Jersey Department of Corrections, would play integral parts in saving that trooper.

"I said, 'Hey, the car's on fire. We've got to get you out of here.'"

No stranger to hazardous situations, Manstream served 23 years and two combat tours -- Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990-1991 and Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom in 2003 --

with the United States Marine Corps, earning the rank of Sergeant Major. Joining the New Jersey Department of Corrections in 1991, Manstream is currently a major at the Correctional Staff Training Academy.

On this October day, he was traveling on Route 195, on his way back to the Training Academy in Sea Girt from the Central Office headquarters in Trenton. On the road just in front of Manstream, in an effort to avoid a car that cut him off, a motorist had crashed into the guard rail and, unable to stop, a state trooper had smashed into that car.

"I started to see debris in the road, a little ways up," Manstream related. "I saw a state trooper car, and I didn't even notice the car behind him. I stopped and got out, and I heard Officer Banko calling my name."

At the same time, SCO Marlena Banko of the Central Transportation Unit, an officer since 2009, was with her partner, transporting an inmate back to the Albert C. Wagner Youth Correctional Facility in Bordentown. Coincidentally, they were traveling in the other direction on Route 195, almost directly opposite the scene of the accident.

Leaving her partner in the van with the inmate, Banko vaulted over the road divider and, together with Manstream, ran to the smoldering trooper car.

"When we ran over to the car, we could already see smoke," Banko said, "and you could see flames coming out from under the hood."

"By the time we got to the car, the trooper was semi-conscious, and he started to fight us a little bit, for whatever reason," Manstream added. "I said, 'Hey, the car's on fire. We've got to get you out of here.'"

"Of course, we were concerned with the car blowing up," Banko noted.

Half dragging, half carrying the injured trooper, Manstream and Banko managed to get the trooper about 30 yards from the smoking vehicle. Once they were sure the trooper was safe, they looked toward the other vehicle and saw that the occupants had been safely removed. Approximately three minutes later, the vehicle exploded.

Firefighters and first aid from local areas converged on the scene, as did State Police, and all lanes, both eastbound and westbound, were shut down during the cleanup.

Fortunately, neither the trooper nor those in the other vehicle sustained life-threatening injuries.

Both Manstream and Banko subsequently were recognized for their courageous actions with a commendation from Commissioner Gary Lanigan and the NJDOC.

"I'm glad we happened to be there and that we could help," Manstream declared.





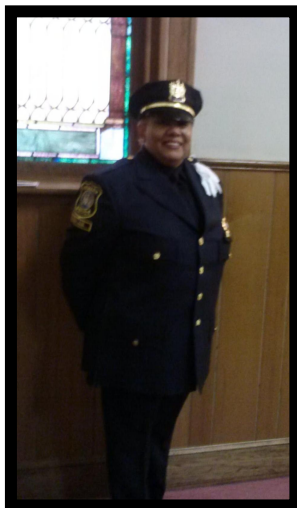
Helping Hand

WINTER 2013



Classification Officer Completes Program, Serves as Police Chaplain

During a meeting of the Newark Police Clergy Alliance more than two years ago, Esther Rosa found out about a program through which the alliance trains and certifies ministers to perform chaplaincy work throughout the community. By the time the meeting had ended, Rosa, a classification officer at Northern State Prison, already had decided to become involved.



Esther Rosa is a member of the Newark Police Clergy Alliance's Class of 2012.

"My calling, my spiritual gift is to perform ministry work wherever I'm needed," said Rosa, an ordained minister since 2004. "What I learned at that meeting was that there would be a multi-cultural group of people who would be trained to work together to help with the spiritual and emotional needs of our citizens. Not only would we be serving our officers and firefighters and their family members, but we we'd be serving any individual in the city who needs assistance."

Rosa and 32 classmates spent nearly a year in an intensive program exploring such topics as "Stress Management," "Ecumenicalism," "Moral Discretion" and "Listening and Communications Skills."

Upon completion of the curriculum, a commencement ceremony was held September 8, 2012, at Newark's Calvary Gospel Church. As police chaplains, the graduates were qualified to perform a wide variety of functions. For example, a police chaplain can assist police officers during a crisis situation in which the presence of a trained chaplain could prove beneficial; visit sick or injured members of the police department at home or in the hospital; and act as a liaison with ministerial

associations on matters relating to the moral, spiritual and religious welfare on police personnel.

Graduates of the program are required to serve as volunteer chaplains a minimum of 12 hours per month. Rosa, who volunteers for more than 20 hours some months, currently serves as a pastoral counselor at a pair of Newark hospitals -- the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) and Columbus Hospital.

"It's been so rewarding," said Rosa, the mother of three adult children. "One day, I was at the hospital (UMDNJ), and a notification was sent out that a priest was needed in the Trauma Unit, as per the request of the family members of a patient. I approached the family and explained to them that while I'm not a priest, I am a minister and a chaplain and that I was willing to help. I went on to pray for the patient and speak at length to the family. They were so grateful, and I came away with a true sense of satisfaction that I was able to apply what I'd learned. For me, there is no better feeling."

As an added bonus, Rosa, who has been employed by the New Jersey Department of Corrections since 1990, believes her chaplaincy work has had a positive impact on her performance in the workplace.

"You learn to look at people and try to understand why they might be angry or have a certain stress level," she explained. "Then you respond accordingly. I find myself applying those lessons as a chaplain, on the job and in my everyday life."

Wooten-Troutman is Presented with Community Outreach Award

Another NJDOC chaplain, Rev. Denise Wooten-Troutman of the Office of Chaplaincy, received the New Jersey Foundation of Leadership, Education and Arts Development's 2013 Community Outreach Award on behalf of Workmen Devoted to Edifying the Body of Christ Evangelistic Church in Berlin, which she founded and serves as pastor.

The award was presented during a luncheon held February 17 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cherry Hill.



Rev. Denise Wooten-Troutman (left) receives the 2013 Community Outreach Award from Dorothy Brocco, a board member of the New Jersey Foundation of Leadership, Education and Arts Development.